



Design Components of St. Patrick's Island

Calgary's newest island playground will feature remarkable views of downtown Calgary, family-friendly play zones for all seasons and quiet respite areas for those seeking a direct connection to nature. Our development components include:

- **THE TIP**

Located at the westernmost edge of the island (west of the new pedestrian bridge), the **Tip** is designed to take advantage of the views of the river and downtown Calgary. Equipped with seating, as well as an informal plaza for gathering, all elements of the Tip are designed to withstand annual flooding while providing a respite area and vantage point for those recreational users who are seeking a natural experience at the water's edge.

- **THE SEASONAL BREACH**

Sometime in the 1960's a historic channel of St. Patrick's Island was filled in to accommodate the construction of a pedestrian bridge connecting the island to the south bank of the Bow River.

In our redesign of St. Patrick's Island, the **Seasonal Breach** allows for the re-installation of this historic channel thus creating a functioning gravel bar between the main stem of the Bow River and its northern channel

The **Seasonal Breach** design includes two channels of varying depths; a deeper channel which runs parallel to the historic bank edge and features large mature trees, and a shallow channel, bordered by a south facing gravel beach and a lawn seating area for those who are interested in taking in some sunshine while reading their favorite book.

A small pedestrian plaza complete with seating and bike parking, sits immediately adjacent to the Seasonal Breach. Due to its engineered nature, the breach will provide a safe place for kids to play during the summer, allowing them to put their toes in the water – a strong public desire identified through the yearlong public engagement process. During the winter months, the breach can accommodate some skating or sliding fun for those wishing a truly Canadian

experience! Easy and safe access from adjacent banks will allow adults and children to venture out onto the breach during most of the year.

Two crossings over the breach will connect visitors to the park's many amenities and recreational zones. The low channel crossing is a drivable pathway for emergency, maintenance and security vehicles. It is resistant to flood conditions. The second crossing is specifically for pedestrians and cyclists who are eager to experience the island's trails and nature paths; this crossing will be a light steel construction.

- **THE RISE**

Attend a musical performance, go tobogganing or get a bird's eye view of downtown Calgary from atop of The Rise. Equipped with services to facilitate a range of activities, this multipurpose grassy knoll stands nine (9) metres high and is sloped on one side to face downtown. It provides a perfect outdoor amphitheatre setting for community celebrations, performances, or movies in the park.

The terraced slopes of the remaining sides will be planted to provide natural habitat for the island's animals and birds, while a fire pit set atop of the Rise will keep you warm during those long winter runs! The Rise is being created by using the lowest emission and most environmentally friendly material - the fill which is being removed to create the Breach (and Lowland Channel).

- **THE LOWLAND CHANNEL**

In 1920, a second historic channel was filled between St. Patrick's Island and St. George's Island— now home to the Calgary Zoo. In the landscape plan, this **Lowland Channel** will be restored and deepened to create a seasonal, true riparian wetland, within the core of the island.

Adding the wetland will greatly enhance the diversity of species that can take inhabit the island. Various species of bats, frogs, ducks, gulls, squirrels, rabbits and insects are expected to make a home in this area. So, for those Calgarians who are true nature buffs and observers, the lowland channel will be a perfect hangout.

An elevated boardwalk system (we call it the 'Transect') will provide elevated access across the wetland and the only access into/through the mature Gallery Forest. The elevated design of the Transect enables access into environmentally sensitive areas, while minimizing disturbance.

- **The PLAYMOUND, the PICNIC GROVE, and the GALLERY FOREST**

For families who aspire to spend time together in Calgary's great outdoors these recreational features are sure to provide hours and hours of family fun.

The **Playmound** is specifically designed to integrate into the natural vegetation, contours, and landforms of the island and will house a variety of children's play equipment for children of all ages and abilities. Ample seating areas and furnishings will be provided so parents can easily supervisor their children while at play.

On the north side of the island, close to the Lookout, the **Picnic Grove** is located among a young balsam poplar woodland area. This area includes picnic tables and outdoor grills set on a soft trail mix surface and placed to ensure both sunny and shady locations at various times of day.

Located along the south-eastern corner of the island the **Gallery Forest** was found to be the most important existing habitat on the island, with the potential to be the home to nesting bald eagles, great horned owls and songbirds. To protect the Gallery Forest and ensure its long term health and function, our design aims to encourage rest and regeneration of this area. The design also supports the removal of invasive species and repopulation of native species. Pruning and removal of deadwood and overgrown areas will allow a more natural balance of light to reach the soil thereby ensuring the ongoing health of the Gallery Forest.

- **The LOOKOUT**

The **Lookout** Plaza at the eastern edge of the park offers spaces created for many experiences. It includes seating areas, a small amphitheatre, water features, and overviews of the Lowland Channel, pathways and other areas of the park. It also serves as a meeting place and gateway into St. Patrick's Island from the east or from the Calgary Zoo parking area.

The Lookout can be used for small celebrations and impromptu gatherings and is serviced by washrooms, parking, maintenance sheds and electrical services which can be used by food trucks, ticket kiosks, and product display units. The Lookout also provides for each loading and unloading access to the COVE, a recreational zone designed for multiple uses.

- **The COVE**

Along the southern edge of the island, the **Cove** is designed to encourage fishing, kayaking and wading. It provides quick access to the Lookout and the lowland channel riparian areas of the island. With RiverWalk nearby, kayakers can take in a performance or concert in the plaza and then float or paddle into the Cove to do an afternoon run or hike on the island. A perfect day on the river!

- **Site Circulation and Connecting Pathways**

The circulation system for St. Patrick's Island was developed to maximize access throughout the park in a series of loops. A primary path system - 4 metres wide - allows for shared pedestrian, bicycle and emergency/service access and provides a connection from the western point of entry from the new pedestrian bridge to the eastern limits of the project at the Lookout.

Secondary pathways will provide special, more intimate experiences and will be constructed of materials that provide a more natural feel. These secondary pathways link to the primary path system to create a series of loops, which connect the park from end to end and circle the major event or recreational areas. The pathways will also connect you onto St. Patrick's Island Bridge so that you may further explore the 700+ kilometres of pathways around Calgary.

Improving access to the island and connectivity between its features will increase the number of people who will enjoy the island while creating identifiable spaces and a sense of security. A series of linked, active destinations will distribute people along lighted pathways. Multiple uses for the activity areas or recreational zones will encourage overlapping age groups and social engagement. Safety is the result of being in a place where activity, visibility and clear circulation exist together. These layers provide places for people to inhabit and create multiple opportunities to watch other people, interact with people, or with nature.

- **Access and Parking Improvements**

A parking lot near the Calgary Zoo (near 12 Street NE located at the east end of the park) currently offers visitors 220 parking stalls. With the completion of the St. Patrick's Island, the lot will be expanded to add 50 new parking stalls. It is anticipated that the lot will be able to accommodate most of the parking demand and that any excess demand can be absorbed through other modes of transportation given the high degree of pedestrian-bicycle and transit access to the park as described above.